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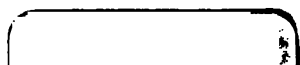
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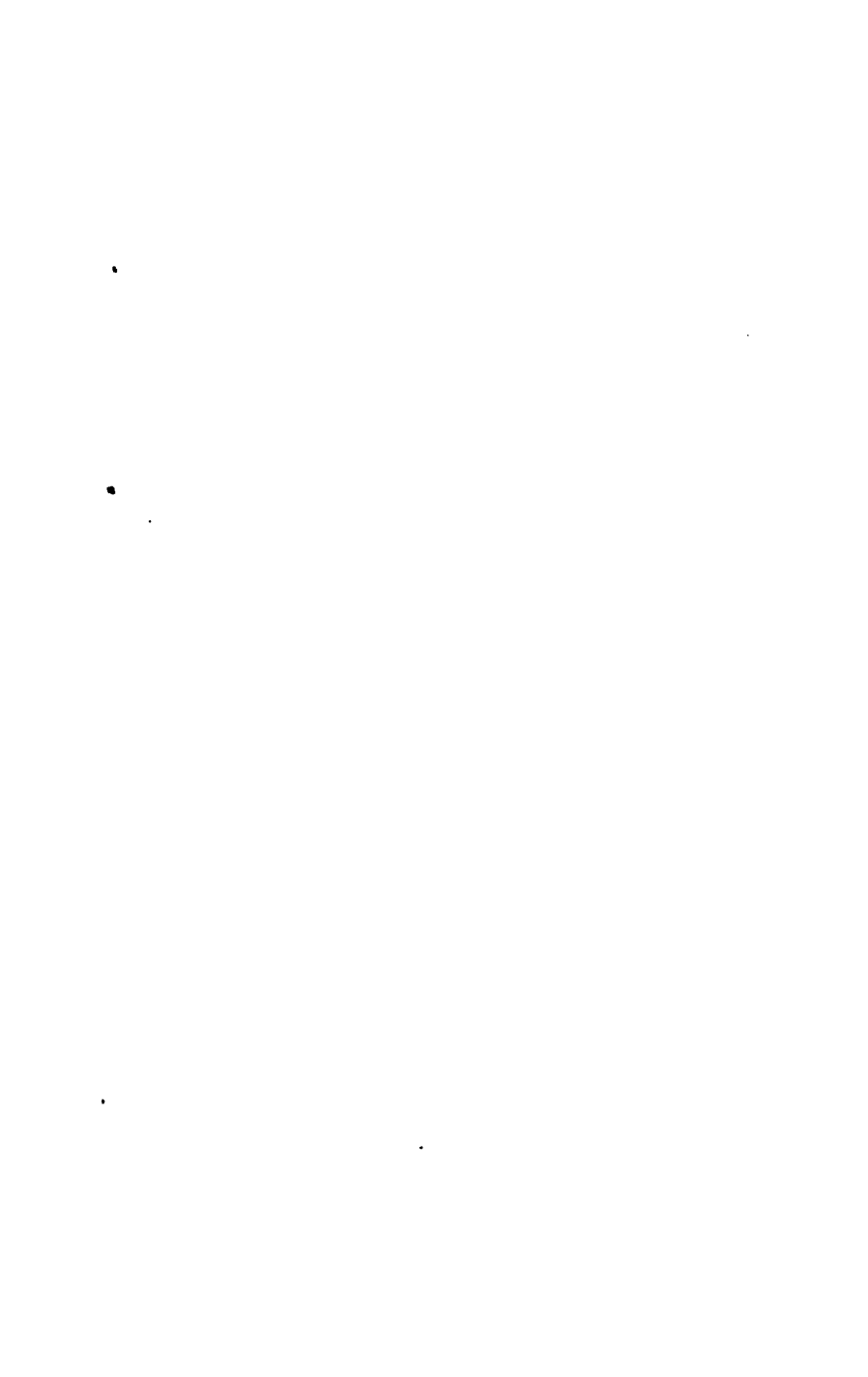
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THE  
CHURCH IN THE WORLD:

OR,

The Lining among the Dead

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BY THE

REV. J. BAINBRIDGE SMITH, M.A.

FORMERLY OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE;  
PROFESSOR OF MATHEMATICS AND VICE-PRESIDENT OF KING'S  
COLLEGE, WINDSOR, NOVA SCOTIA.

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"O pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love  
thee."—PSALM cxxii. 6.

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TO

*His Father,*

THE REV. J. B. SMITH, D.D.

RECTOR OF MARTIN AND SOTBY,

AND HEAD MASTER OF HORNCASTLE GRAMMAR SCHOOL,

*This little Volume,*

THE FIRST FRUITS OF HIS PEN,

IS INSCRIBED,

AS AN OFFERING OF LOVE,

AND TRIBUTE OF WARMEST GRATITUDE,

FOR PATERNAL CARE AND KINDNESS,

BY HIS AFFECTIONATE SON,

THE AUTHOR.

KING'S COLLEGE, WINDSOR.

NOVA SCOTIA, NOV. 26, 1850.





## P R E F A C E.

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### TO THE READER.

THE present Work lays small claim to originality ; indeed, the Doctrines of the Church being ever the same, it has not been the aim of the Author to introduce any new dogma of his own. Still, however, as they are capable, like the colours in the kaleidoscope, of being seen under a variety of beautiful aspects, it has been his desire to present a portion of them under one such pleasing form. If this has been in any way attained, and no sacrifice of truth has taken place in the attempt, his design will have been amply fulfilled.

The works of other authors have been consulted, especially Keble's "Christian Year;" and their language has, in some instances, been employed. Wherever this is the case, it is acknowledged in a note.

KING'S COLLEGE, WINDSOR,  
*Nov. 26, 1850.*

## POSTSCRIPT.

WHEN the present publication was already in the press, the act of the Pope of Rome, in intruding schismatical Bishops into a Country already occupied by the English Episcopate, took place. The Author feels it incumbent on him, under the circumstances, to express his warm indignation at the measure ; inasmuch as it ignores the very existence of the Church whose Orders he (however unworthy) bears ; and also is in utter defiance of a decree of the third Œcumenical Council, held at Ephesus, A.D. 431.

It is an instance of Papal aggression, he conceives, only too consistent with that spirit of overweening ambition, which pervades the whole Ecclesiastical system of modern Rome, and prompts it to overleap every obstacle that is opposed to its will.

How far, however, the principles that have influenced the short-sighted policy of Government, of late years, may have been conducive of such a result, is a question well worthy of consideration. When Roman Catholic Prelates, in

other parts of the British dominions, have been fostered and caressed, as in Ireland and in the Colonies, we cannot feel surprise that the Pope should imagine that a like treatment would be extended to them in England. It is to the departure from the ancient fundamental laws of our Constitution, that the obnoxious occurrence would seem to be mainly owing.

Is it not a time, the Author would ask, when the English Church is bound to declare her mind *synodically* on the subject; and *formally* to take such steps as are necessary, at this crisis of her history? For in the full exercise of those Constitutional powers which are the heritage of the Church, but which for various reasons have for so long a period been denied her, exists, as he humbly believes, her most effectual instrument (if not, indeed, her only one) against the proud assumptions of Rome. A policy that silences her voice, and withholds from her the freedom which *every other* Christian body, nay, which *every secular* corporation enjoys, ignores her existence almost as much in effect, as the Papal Bull of the 24th September, 1850.

KING'S COLLEGE, WINDSOR,  
Nov. 29, 1850.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE CATHEDRAL.

#### DAILY PRAYER.

“The door is closed—but soft and deep  
Around the awful arches sweep  
Such airs, as soothe a hermit’s sleep.

“From each carved nook, and fretted bend,  
Cornice and gallery seem to send  
Tones, that with seraph hymns might blend.”

CHRISTIAN YEAR.

METHOUGHT I stood in a cathedral, in my native land. The sunlight fell, in dim and varied hues, on the pavement beneath my feet. The rich colours of the stained windows had softened and mellowed it, as it came streaming in. The broad glare of day, that shone on the world at large, and lighted man to his ordinary avocations, might not enter abruptly into the sanctuary of God. It was meet that it should first pass through

an illumined record of saints and angels ; that it should dwell on some gracious act, or peruse some tale of suffering, of the Incarnate One. Chastened and subdued in consequence, a change was thus wrought upon it, by which its whole character was tinged ; and this not merely for the moment, but ever after the holy influence remained, throwing a hallowed charm over the massive grandeur of the Temple of the Lord, and infusing a deeper shade of awe and reverence into the devotions of His people. The effect indeed of that "dim religious light" on the human mind, is as salutary as it is universal. It silently, but most significantly, rebukes the thoughtless levity of man ; and testifies against his habitual forgetfulness of all holy impressions.

But, hark ! the voice of prayer falls upon the ear. The chant, like a long-sustained cry, rises in plaintive accents, as of a child pleading to its earthly parent. In the vast space, it seems lost. How shall it pierce the skies? thought I. Scarcely had I asked myself this, when a bright Being stood by my side. "I am FAITH," said she,

"look up and see." I did so, and a glorious sight presented itself to my astonished gaze.

Over the choir, and especially above the altar, throughout the whole area, amid the vast columns, and extending even to the vaulted roof, were angel-forms assembled, all rapt as in deep attention, all stedfastly bent the same way.

"The .chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: and the Lord is among them, as in the holy place of Sinai<sup>1</sup>," whispered the Spirit at my side.

Then I remarked, that as the name of JESUS was pronounced, the whole of that angelic host, with one accord, bowed the head with most lowly reverence; and immediately the Prayer had wings given it, wherewith to soar on high. It did not, however, depart; for I was made aware of the presence of a dazzling glory, like unto the "bright morning star," only far more brilliant. The light, indeed, was so intense,

<sup>1</sup> Ps. lxxviii. 17.



that even the angels could not look steadily upon it; and I was compelled to lower my gaze in consequence. FAITH, however, bade me look up. I did so, and found my eyes strengthened, so that I was enabled to mark what took place. The Prayer, I saw, was conducted with incredible swiftness, by one who seemed a "ministering spirit," to the Glory above-mentioned, which stood directly over the altar<sup>2</sup>.

Further I saw not; but my companion informed me, that the Being whom the Glory encircled, presented it on a golden censer, whereon was ever burning the incense of His own love, to the Almighty Father of all. "And," she added, "all prayers offered up in His holy Name, by lowly and devout suppliants, are similarly received. But chiefly so are the prayers of His Church. Short-sighted men may think them cold and formal; and because they fail to pierce their own dull souls, or excite

<sup>2</sup> "I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels, which present the prayers of the saints, and go in and out before the Holy One."—Tobit xii. 15.

their carnal sympathies, they are tempted to despise them. But let His followers rest assured that He can, and if they have but faith, He will turn them into the most potent cry that ever entered into the ears of the Most High."

"Why, then," said I, "do men so neglect the Church's daily round of prayer and praise?"

She gazed at me sorrowfully: "It is because of their want of faith," she replied.

I mused upon her answer; for I well knew that many, very many, of those who were in the habit constantly of inculcating faith from the pulpit, as necessary to salvation, disobeyed the Church's directions in this particular; and never were her holy Matins and Evening Song, or the solemn Litany, used by them, but upon the Sunday.

She seemed to read my thoughts; for she continued, "You think my answer strange;

but men mistake what faith is. They think it some feeling of the mind, difficult to attain ; an act of the reason, that requires a mature intellect in order to compass it. But herein they delude themselves. Faith is simple, unquestioning, child-like ; leading those who have it to obey, not curiously to inquire. A child has it the most perfectly."

"Therefore it is written," I added, half aloud, "'Whosoever shall humble himself as a little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.'"

"Most true," she said ; "and they who rely on the feelings and workings of their own minds, neglect Him Who alone can build them up, the wise Master-builder. They trust to what, after all, are but human efforts. They strive after mere 'hay, wood, and stubble;' whereas the 'gold, silver, and precious stones,' which He, and He alone, can give, these they turn away from, these they lose. Ah ! would that men had but the simple faith which the Church teaches ! Would that they unpretendingly did what she

has appointed ! Then from ten thousand altars in this happy land would her holy prayers ascend. Carried by Him who loves her, to the footstool of grace—the aspirations of thousands on thousands of sympathetic hearts—there would they unite, there would they meet in one vast stream, and there together would they

‘Swell on high  
Their chant of many parts.’”

Conversing thus with the being at my side, I was still not unobservant of what took place within the sacred edifice. More especially when the anthem had commenced, and the organ’s solemn tones were breathing out their thrilling and unearthly strains, did I mark the scene before me. Priests in hood and stole, and clothed in white linen, as emblematic of the “righteousness of saints,” together with a white-robed choir, led on the song of praise, in which more than one willing voice among the congregation was heard to join. Not a few there were, however, who, either from diffidence, or natural inability to sing, suffered no sound to

escape their lips ; but their spirit, I saw, was intently occupied in the act of adoration. They did not, as some persons do, gaze at the singers, as if the mere human performance were the sole object of their attention. No ; their thoughts were absorbed in the contemplation of Him in whose service they were engaged. They were evidently “singing and making melody in their hearts to the Lord ;” and their minstrelsy, though unheard by mortal ear, was wafted in soft, melodious accents on the wings of seraphim, and combined, in sweet harmonious concord, with the hallelujahs of their brethren.

Among the choristers was a little child of singular beauty and intelligence, who carolled away in the joy of his heart, as if under the influence of inspiration. An angel stood by him, very like him in appearance, so far, at least, as a heavenly being can resemble an earthly one ; and FAITH whispered me, “that it was the spiritual guardian given him at his baptism.” This attendant, I saw, aided him, and gave him strength to perform his part ; and

his voice was, in consequence, distinctly heard all around. It soared up blithely in clear, ringing strains, like the lark's in mid-heaven, when chanting its morning hymn to its Maker.

This was not the case, I observed, with all. There was a harshness and dissonance perceptible in the tones of several; and some were wholly inaudible. All of them, it is true, were good singers, and each, to human perception, executed his part faultlessly; but sin hindered their song from being so heard by the spiritual ear; and, in the case of the last-mentioned, their strains were deemed altogether unworthy to mingle with that holy stream of praise which entered into the cloud of glory, and into the presence of One "Who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity." Their robes, too, white though they were, could not hide the foul stains that showed through them; and their attendant angels (for even they had their guardian spirits) stood aloof, as if not permitted to exercise their full influence upon them; and hung their heads in sorrow, grieving that lips which had never

breathed the words of confession and prayer, should dare thus to sing the praises of the Most High. For

“They knew Him angered worst  
By holiest things  
Profaned and curst<sup>3</sup>.”

There was an old man among them, whose evident emotion attracted my attention. Care and anxiety had bowed him down and furrowed his cheek, and his hair was blanched like the driven snow. His hand shook as the psalm proceeded, and sobs scarce repressed seemed to choke his utterance. I was informed that he had been a great sinner; but that, by the grace of God, he had been led to see the error of his ways, and to repent “carefully with tears.”

“Much has he sorrowed over his past offences, and earnestly has he sought for pardon; and his sorrow being of a godly sort, has wrought for him repentance unto salvation not to be repented of.” So spoke FAITH to me; and the words of

<sup>3</sup> Christian Year.

Scripture came to my mind, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool <sup>4</sup>."

Meanwhile, throughout the sacred edifice the holy sounds swept on ; choir and transept, aisle and nave seemed to vie with one another in sending forth strains of ravishing sweetness. Now it appeared that they were hushing and cradling them to rest ; and now that they were pouring them forth in swelling tones, and joyous cadences. Angels methought flashed by me unceasingly, carrying them along with them, and repeating them one to another ; anon bearing them aloft on strong and buoyant pinions ; fanning them to and fro, till they reverberated again and again, throughout the cloistered arches ; and anon poising them in mid air, on extended wing, so that they seemed to sleep and die away ; until another triumphal burst awoke them once more, and caused all to be again full of the life of divine song.

<sup>4</sup> Isa. i. 18.



At length there was a pause; the music ceased, and the cry of supplication was renewed. In accordance with the Apostle's precept<sup>1</sup>, "I exhort therefore that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority,"—the intercessory prayer of the Church arose. Those in power perchance recked not of it. It was not the Sunday; hence men, for the most part, thought it was no fitting time for prayer. Sufficient, if they gave to God in His sanctuary an hour or two in the week. More were a work of supererogation; so at least they supposed. Still, notwithstanding their indifference, the daily prayer sped on! and, despite their forgetfulness of such being the case, the conviction came strong to my mind, strong as assurance, that they were, in no small degree, indebted to it for their well-being and success. Proud though they were, and confident in their own power; unmindful, in their self-reliance, of Him, who alone would order their schemes aright; for them still the cry of the Church was

<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2.

heard. Happy they, happy the nation, that such was the case ; that in the Sovereign presence their cause was thus unceasingly pleaded. Unseen by the carnal eye, a shield was stretched forth at her entreaty, by the God of love, to protect all orders of the State. The highest and the lowest, the noble and the peasant, the occupant of the throne and the inhabitant of the cottage, alike has reason to be thankful for its shelter and defence.

“ Yes,” said FAITH to me, “ if they were fully assured of these things, how much more careful would they be ; what a holy dread would they feel, of intermeddling with a sacrilegious hand in sacred things ! Even at this moment, let them beware : they are treading on the threshold of forbidden ground ; and should they pass it, the lament of the Church will not go forth in vain.”

“ True,” I replied ; “ but if God withholds His blessing from their counsels, shall we wonder if they do act unwisely ?”

“No,” said she; “but the case is not exactly as you thus describe it. The blessing of the Almighty, in answer to the prayers of His Church, is ever brooding over them, and waits indeed to fall upon them; and if they reject this, if they turn away from the designs that He Himself puts into their hearts, and follow in preference their own wicked imaginings, then bitter, bitter, will their punishment be. Great are the powers intrusted to them, whether for good or evil; but with them are linked responsibilities of no ordinary kind.”

“And if,” said I, “if, in their madness, they should be led to tyrannize over the Church, shall we denounce them?”

“No,” answered she; “denounce them not. It is not for you to sit in judgment. Your duty will be, to give yourselves ever unto prayer. ‘In quietness and confidence shall be your strength.’ Yours be it, to leave the issues in His hands, who ordereth all things in heaven

<sup>6</sup> Isa. xxx. 15.

and in earth. But fearfully will He punish those presumptuous ones who shall dare, with a high hand, to lord it over His heritage. Their conduct will not pass unheeded; for what hath He Himself said?—‘ Shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily’.”

“ Yet,” observed I, “ the foes of holy mother Church are many and powerful. She describes her case but too exactly when she says,—

“ ‘ They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of my head : they that are mine enemies, and would destroy me guiltless, are mighty’.”

“ They scoff at her too, and ridicule her ordinances; so that she may well continue, in the words of the same psalm, and say,

<sup>7</sup> Luke xviii. 7, 8.

<sup>8</sup> Ps. lxi. 4.

“ ‘ I wept, and chastened myself with *fasting*, and that was turned to my *reproof*.

“ ‘ I put on *sackcloth* also: and they *jested* upon me.

“ ‘ They that sit in the gate, speak against me : and the drunkards make songs upon me.’ ”

“ Too true,” answered she with a sigh ; “ but ‘ many though they be, and mighty, yet the Lord who dwelleth on high is mightier ;’ and in the same inspired song there are prophetic imprecations, full of dark and terrible meaning, against all who dare so unrighteously: for is it not therein written?—

“ ‘ Let their table be made a snare to take themselves withal : and let the things, that should have been for their wealth, be unto them an occasion of falling.

“ ‘ Let their eyes be blinded, that they see not : and ever bow thou down their backs.

“ ‘Pour out Thine indignation upon them : and let Thy wrathful displeasure take hold of them.

“ ‘Let their habitation be void : and no man to dwell in their tents.’

“ ‘Let them be wiped out of the book of the living : and not be written among the righteous.’

“Such awful sentences, one would think, would deter any, save he were utterly reckless, from presuming to lift himself up against her. They are words apparently of great harshness ; and thoughtless persons have not scrupled to call them so ; but they are dictated by a spirit of the kindest love, to warn men from the commission of flagrant sin, by proclaiming to them the danger they thereby incur. But to those whose souls are seared,—men who come to reform, as they term it, where they never come to pray ;—ay, where unbidden, indeed, even Seraphs may not tread ;—to such, they will verily prove a curse

of awful import : He will terribly discomfit them : ‘ He will laugh them and their counsels to scorn : the Lord will have them in derision ; He will speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them with His sore displeasure.’ Be assured that as he succoured Israel of old, when the bondage of Egypt had become a burden too heavy to be borne ; so will He in like manner come to the relief of His Church, the Israel of Christ, when the powers of the world tyrannize over and oppress her.”

So saying, she pointed to a book near at hand. I saw that it was the Holy Volume ; and, as I looked upon it, it seemed to open at the 16th chapter of Numbers ; and I read there, of “ certain children of Israel, two hundred and fifty *princes of the assembly*, famous in the congregation, men of renown,” gathering themselves together “ against Moses and against Aaron,” the appointed ministers of God ; and seeking to usurp the offices which they alone might fill. When I had read thus far, the leaf turned over, and my eye fell upon the place

where the end of these men was related ; namely, that the "earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up ;" and that "fire came out from the Lord, and consumed" them.

"Such," she remarked, "was their fate ; the reward of that egregious self-will, which sought to disturb the ecclesiastical discipline that God Himself had appointed."

"But what," inquired I, "must be the conduct of the Church, if men similarly presume to strive with her in these days ?"

"Read," was her reply.

I turned to do so ; and the following words, which described Aaron, the injured priest, still interceding for the erring people, seemed to glow in the sacred page, as if written in letters of fire : "He made an atonement for the people. And he stood between the dead and the living ; and the plague was stayed."



The service was over. The final petition had been concluded. The last word had lingered on the lips of the priest, as if he were loth to cease praying for the flock of Christ. The choir had chanted the closing Amen, which, ringing through the arches, had died away in the distance. There had been silence for a few moments, as the worshippers still remained kneeling in lowly adoration. And once more I stood in the open air.

The full glare of day streamed down upon me, and I was dazzled with its almost painful brilliancy. The hum of men struck on my ear with a harsh and grating discord, in painful contrast to the holy peacefulness that had so lately been all around. A thousand ways was the busy crowd hurrying by. A thousand tongues were aiding the confusion of sound. They had no thought, they had no care, for the heavenly banquet they might have shared with me. For them it seemed spread in vain. They had no desire that a single burst of the praise of the

sanctuary, the prelude of the everlasting song of Heaven, should be wafted in hallowing strains to their ears. No: it would have been an unwelcome sound; for it would have but rebuked their worldliness; their souls would have found no solace in it:

“For, ah! they knew not, love can bless  
E’en in this crowded loneliness,  
Where ever-moving myriads seem to say,  
‘Go—thou art nought to us, nor we to thee—away!’”

I sighed as these thoughts passed rapidly through my mind. A tear fell from my eye, as I contemplated the Temple of the living God deserted by frail, dying man; and, as I did so, the voice which I had so often heard of late came on the gentle breeze in whispering accents, and I caught in faint tones the words,

“THE LIVING AMONG THE DEAD.”

<sup>2</sup> Christian Year.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE COUNTRY CHURCH.

#### ABSOLUTION.

“ Each morn and eve, the golden keys  
Are lifted in the sacred hand,  
To show the sinner on his knees  
Where Heaven’s bright doors wide open stand.

\* \* \* \* \*

“ But touch them trembling ; for that gold  
Proves iron in the unworthy hand,  
To close, not ope, the favour’d fold,  
To bind, not loose, the lost soul’s band.”

LYRA APOSTOLICA.

AGAIN, in the visions of my thought, was I in the house of God ; not, however, in the majestic Cathedral, but in the humble Village Church. It was in the month of April, nigh to the season of Easter—glorious Easter, that tells of a bright morn to follow the night of death ; of a rising

again, to those who slumber in her chill embrace ;  
of “ the living ” to “ the dead.”

The sweet breath of violets and of the primrose scented the air ; the blackbird was carolling on a tree hard by, as if vying with the village bell that was calling the people to worship. Through many a shady lane, over many a grassy footway, by banks redolent with the breezy freshness of early spring, and hawthorn bushes full of a budding and luxuriant maternity, were the people wending their way to the Church of their forefathers. Neighbourly greetings, kindly smiles, and the hearty English grasp of the hand, were every where to be seen. There was to be witnessed the respectful uncovering of the head, on the part of the tenant, and the no less respectful acknowledgment and cordial response of the landlord. Young children were blithely running to and fro, sporting in many an innocent gambol, as the warm rays of the declining sun shone down upon them, and made them happy and mirthful. Their little ringing laughter (subdued, however, as became

the day) fell merrily on my ears. I sighed, as I thought of that mirth being turned hereafter into sorrow, that laughter into tears. But, notwithstanding the cloud of foreboding that skirted the horizon of my thoughts, I could not but contemplate the beauty of the present—the cheerful innocence of those little ones. I mused upon the aptness of comparing them to the lambs of the field. These, as if in emulation of them, were at play in the adjoining pastures; and, as I looked at them thus side by side, my reflections were irresistibly led to dwell upon the great Antitype of their innocence, the “Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world.”

Thus together did they all, young and old, high and low, rich and poor, meet on that quiet afternoon. Together did they pursue one common course, to fall down and adore, in one holy ritual, and in their one Village Church, that one great Being before Whom they well knew they all appeared equal—all as one.

Hence it was, that the fabric itself had been

made to correspond with such ideas. In it were none of the distinctions of human pride which, alas ! too commonly prevail—pointing to where the rich sit in cushioned seat, and the poor kneel—if, indeed, they have kneeling-space allowed them—on the damp and uncleansed floor. There was no staring pew, flaunting for one brief while with gaudy apparel, and then deserted, it might be, for months, while its tenants were pursuing the phantom, pleasure, in foreign lands, or immersed in the dissipation of their own ;—so much consecrated space set apart, not to God for ever, but, as it would seem, to “ the family at the Hall : ”—there was no such desecration here. To the eye, at least, all was alike, befitting His more immediate Presence, in Whose sight all are alike.

The venerable building, I was delighted to see, had been restored to its primitive perfection. The unseemly plaster with which fanaticism had, in times bygone, disfigured the holy walls, had been carefully removed ; and the simple carving of its first builders had again been brought to

light. Their skilful workmanship and chaste designs, the silent records of their worth, were no longer ungratefully shut out of view. The holy thoughts of their forefathers, who slept around them; their pious musings, wrought into the very stone, and living there still, when the hands that had traced them had long been mingled with the dust;—these things were not concealed, as though they had been a disgrace to their descendants, and such that the light of day might not reveal them. No; men happily there were no longer (or, at all events, their influence was gone), who could in this way dishonour the ashes of the dead, by contemptuously defacing all that they had, when alive, so reverently laboured at.

Under the auspices of a happier day, the slough which had for many years encrusted the sacred edifice had been cast off, and like the flowers, that were even then budding forth after their winter's sleep in renewed freshness, so did it wake up from the benumbing lethargy of puritanism, and resume its pristine loveliness. Here

was the well-developed chancel, and the holy altar duly raised, so as to be visible to all. This (it being the season of Lent) had been enveloped in a covering of dark violet, on which was worked in gold a plain cross, and the sacred monogram. Near it were sedilia for the clergy, and, at a short distance, two steps lower, were modest stalls for the choir.

Separating the chancel from the nave, was an oaken screen of elegant tracery, dividing, as it were, the Holy from the Holy of Holies. The seats in the nave were open and of dark wood, of the same kind as the high-pitched roof, which spanned all over head. At the south-west corner of the Church, near the entrance, stood the font, of stone, resting on a basement of encaustic tiles, and covered with an oaken slab; and attached to one of the adjacent pillars was the poor-box, having an appropriate scroll written over it.

Presently through the south porch poured the tide of worshippers. Bowing as they entered



into the presence-chamber of God, each one proceeded to take his place ; and, as he did so, knelt reverently to sue for grace, that the holy service in which he was shortly to join, might be to him as the bread of his soul. Even the thoughtless, I observed, made obeisance on entering, either from the force of example, or the effect of habit. But even this, I thought, showed that there was some secret influence at work within, by which the outer man to a certain extent was guided.

And now there is quiet within the sacred walls, and each one seems intent on holy thoughts. The bell ceases ringing, and silence reigns awhile. Presently the Priest enters, and takes his place where prayer is wont to be made. He kneels him lowly down on bended knee to seek for strength, which God alone can give, to aid him and the assembled congregation in the work they are about to engage in. It is a high and a holy work he has to discharge ; no less than to lead the devotions of the Lord's people, in the sacrifice they are met to offer up,

and to raise on high, in worthy strains, the voice of praise and of thanksgiving. "The Lord be with thee, and with thy spirit," thou man of God! May thy prayer be like that of the patriarchs of old, whom in thy silver locks and reverend appearance thou dost verily resemble!


The grey hairs of that old man, as he thus prostrated himself, were to him indeed "a crown of glory." Every one of them seemed to me to have a tongue, and to be pleading in mild rebuke with those who respected not "holiness to the Lord," though the example of age thus enforced it upon them. The words of his lips might perchance have fallen unregarded by such; but the devotion so habitually manifested in his own deportment, must have pleaded in terms that few could have been hardened enough to resist.

I have said that he was old, and that his locks were as silver; but though stricken in years, he was not withal infirm. Like Moses, the leader of Israel, it might be written of him, "That his eye was not dim, nor was his natural force

abated." Slowly rising, and with him the whole congregation, he commenced with one of the opening sentences of our sublime ritual.

Oh how pleasantly sounded those old familiar words in my ears ! Uttered by that aged priest, and in that quiet country Church, what a host of associations did they conjure up ! what a flood of recollections came rushing over my imagination ! Carried away by an uncontrollable impulse, I was guilty of an act of inattention, which I do not seek to palliate, knowing how idle, or even worse than idle, such an endeavour would be. The present faded from my sight, and other scenes of other days passed before me in rapid succession. I was again a boy, rambling in happy thought, by my father's side, through woods and meadows, by rippling streams and shady groves, to the old Parish Church of my childhood's days ! now taking hold of his kind hand, and now running off to chase a butterfly, that flitted across my path. The sighing of the old trees, that encircled a crumbling ruin on our way thither, was once more in my ears ; and the

hoarse cry of the rooks, that on many a bough built their nests, and cradled their noisy young. Groups of men, women, and children—well-known faces—I again saw, wide apart at first, then gradually approaching. Nearer and nearer do they come; and now they have met together, and are chatting amicably among themselves, as they bend their steps to the house of God. The baying of the watch-dog, left in charge at home, whilst his master is away, comes floating through the stillness, on the summer air. The old Church itself, built upon a hill, looms upward in the evening sky, pointing duly East, the quarter where the sun rises, as bidding all remember the rising from the night of death. It stands there, amid the graves of departed generations, watching over their remains, and proclaiming continually its eternal lesson, of “the living among the dead.” All these reminiscences came upon me, like a strain of familiar song, long unheard, but not forgotten. Yes;—for the scenes impressed on the blank page of childhood’s memory are indelibly traced there. Constantly will they present themselves, ever fresh, ever vivid. But



more than usually so did they then rise before me, as in keeping with the holy place, in which was inculcated a religion that binds together every age, and bids the man in the full pride of his days still to humble himself as a little child. They disappeared however as suddenly as they had arisen ; and, unconscious of the “baseless fabric” of the vision, I was once more in the little Village Church, with my attention fixed on the duties of the day.

After having addressed the assembled multitude in the accustomed exhortation, the minister has turned in prayer to God<sup>1</sup>. Along with him,

<sup>1</sup> Surely it is more seemly to turn away from the people, whilst saying the *prayers* of the Church. It cannot be right even in *appearance*, to address the *people* in prayer. And even, independently of this, which is perhaps the most proper light to view it in, none but the most morbid taste would care to witness the emotions that must naturally show themselves, in the countenance of any one earnestly entreating God for forgiveness, and for a continuance of His mercies. It is high time that the present indecorous custom should cease ; and that the clergy, as well as their flocks, following primitive usage, should pay no such disrespect to that Altar, whereon we “do shew forth the Lord’s death till he come,” as to turn their backs upon it during divine service.

have the people, as one man, knelt likewise ; and together, in the same humble posture, are they uttering the same expressions of humiliation and regret ; together do they confess their grievous backslidings, and manifold deficiencies ; and together do they implore, in Jesu's name, to be forgiven, and enabled to live to the glory of Him who had created them.

The choir, I would observe,—village choir though it was,—seemed to be aware, that it was their duty to lead the responses generally, as well as to sing the praises more particularly. Their practice therefore was very similar to that of a cathedral choir. And however imperfect their performance might have sounded to the cultivated ear, one thing at least could not fail to strike the observer, and that was, their devout behaviour. I had often seen (and my heart had bled at the melancholy spectacle) the thoughtless and irreverent conduct of similar bodies, as evinced in their various attitudes, in their negligence of prescribed forms, their inattention and their levity of manner. But here, careful training

and judicious management, the eye of a pastor and a paternal love, had exhibited its fruits, in a choir alive to the solemn responsibilities of their office. Having to sing the praises of the Most High in His temple, their outward bearing seemed to show, that they were fully aware how important it was that their service and sacrifice should not be that of fools.

Hence it was, that they failed not to make humble and audible confession; to prostrate themselves lowly, with plaintive tones, and chastened cry; and now were anxiously awaiting the sentence of absolution to be pronounced by the Ambassador of the Almighty, before they deemed themselves in any way meet to raise on high the song of thanksgiving.

Whilst thus accompanying them myself, a voice bade me look up. It was the same that I had heard when in the *Cathedral*<sup>2</sup>; and, recognizing its accents, I at once complied.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 2.

The Amen was being chanted at the time ; and on raising my head, a vision was presented to my eyes, similar to what I had *there* witnessed ; for here over the Village Altar was the Cloud of Glory resting ; and ministering spirits in attendance, equally as in the more sumptuous Fabric.

But the words of absolution had been commenced ; and I perceived, that forthwith over the heads of several, bowed in prayer, and seemingly overwhelmed with contrition, were rays of light hovering, which ever and anon took to themselves a distinct shape, resembling *keys*.

I looked at my companion for an explanation. She beckoned me to direct my gaze to the chancel. I did so, and saw it more than ordinarily illuminated. And as the priest, facing the people, stood up in his place, and addressed them in the gracious language of pardon and forgiveness, a vivid stream, methought, kept flowing from the Cloud of Glory over the Altar, until it shone with a lustrous brightness all



around him: from whence the rays, which I had before observed, were glancing off on every side.

Here, the old man,—there, the modest maiden,—here, one in the full vigour of his days,—and there, the little child,—were alike the objects over whom those tongues of flame were resting.

I turned to my guide with an inquiring glance. “That light,” she said, “emanates from the boundless mercy of God. You see that it encircles the priest. It does so, because he is the appointed mouthpiece of the Church, and speaks what she directs; and to the Church was given of old the power of binding and loosing. It is a fearful power, and she may not abuse it. She may not act in this matter otherwise than her Master has ordained. Whilst, however, her conduct is in accordance with His will, her sentence will be His sentence, her words His words; and whatsoever she binds on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever she looses on earth shal

be loosed in heaven<sup>3</sup>. In the hands of her priests are placed the 'keys of the kingdom of heaven.' True, they are powerless to use them, save as their Lord and Master has appointed. They herein exercise, not a judicial, but a ministerial office. Still, theirs is the holy task, duly to hold them, day and night, before penitent sinners, in the sanctuary. To them she said, when she most solemnly set them apart for the office and work they fill, 'Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained<sup>4</sup>.' Therefore, so long as they keep within the limits assigned to them, viz., the faithful dispensation of God's word and sacraments, so long will their sentence be confirmed; they will be 'unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life<sup>5</sup>!' To the repentant, their words will be as 'golden keys,' opening their heart to the

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xviii. 18.

<sup>4</sup> Service for the Ordering of Priests.

<sup>5</sup> 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.

influence of the Holy Spirit ; who forthwith proceeds to enlarge His abode there, and further the growth of that indwelling presence, the germ of which had been planted in the waters of baptism. But to the hardened and impenitent, they will be as iron, locking up the heart in its own narrowness, immuring it within the walls of its own selfishness. For that light may not glow in vain. It either illuminates and warms the heart, or else it sears and blasts it. The spirit of man may not resist it, without suffering in consequence. Long, long indeed, may a gracious God bear with him, and utter His warnings by the mouth of His servants ; but there is a point beyond which the forbearance of the Most Merciful may not be tried ; and then the greater the mercy that has been shown, the greater will be the punishment awarded."

" They then," I remarked, " over whom those rays are hovering, are benefited thereby."

" Undoubtedly," said she ; " as tongues of flame, they speak peace and joy in the Holy

Ghost to their inmost souls. They are 'golden keys' to them, as I before told you, unlocking their affections and their desires to His gracious influence. They are the seal of pardon for past sin, baptizing with fire the inner man ; cleansing it, that it may be a meet residence for the Spirit of Christ ; pervading and purifying their whole nature, and making them, body and soul, 'the temples' of the living God."

"But why should they rest over the heads of those babes?" I asked. "Can they be sorry, in any suitable degree, for what they have done, having so little knowledge of the nature of sin?"

"According to their ability," answered she, "so can they sorrow. The Almighty judges not as man judges. In His sight all are children ; in mental deficiency, that is, though not in innocence. The thoughts of a man, and the workings of his intellect, be they never so satisfactory and convincing in his own sight, are as crude in the

<sup>6</sup> 1 Cor. vi. 19.

eyes of Infinite Wisdom, as the veriest prattle of a child. Remember this; and then think whither your question would lead you. You imply by it, that in order to be of any avail, penitence must pre-suppose the possession, on man's part, of a due appreciation of the enormity of sin. Now, that being the case, none could properly repent; for none can have such an appreciation. No child of Adam can fathom the abyss of iniquity. Only One, who bore the garb of humanity, ever did. Hence, the door of forgiveness must have remained barred for ever! And so indeed it would have been, but that God for Christ's sake, accepts man's feeble efforts. But in this, as in all other spiritual things, he owes its efficiency to the co-operation of the Holy Spirit, who, as you are told, 'helpeth man's infirmities,' and 'maketh intercession for him with groanings that cannot be uttered', and so perfects his otherwise imperfect repentance. And this He does, not only in the case of adults, but in that of children likewise."

<sup>7</sup> Rom. viii. 26.

“But,” said I, “would not such reasoning lead men to suppose, that but slight sorrow for past offences was necessary on their part? And surely this would not be right.”

“Certainly not,” she replied. “What I would impress upon you is, that no one can rely on his own works, whether they be of the mind or of the body; and that as this is true in every thing else pertaining to religion, so is it also in the work of repentance. Man’s sorrow alone is altogether inadequate to the nature of the offence of which he may have been guilty. Not the deepest imaginings, or the profoundest thoughts, can, by any possibility, realize the fearful nature of sin. How hideous it must be, can only be surmised by the fact, that it required God Himself, the Eternal Word, to take flesh, to suffer, to die, and be buried, and to descend into hell, in order that it might be remitted. It may be likened to an actual and real death, of which the death of this world is only a shadow<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> Rev. W. Adams, S.T.P., “Mercy to Babes.”

The offence being boundless, as far as man can conceive, so should the sorrow be, that would expiate it. Hence the necessity for almighty agency, to finish that which is begun. Hence must every one pray, and beseech his Heavenly Father, ‘to grant him *true* repentance *and his Holy Spirit* ;’ that his penitence may, in any degree, be effectual to the pardon of his transgressions. But it is man’s part to seek for this earnestly, even with tears, not ‘lightly and after the manner of fools,’ but with fear and trembling.”

“And can this then,” I urged, “be done by a child?”

“In its degree it may,” she answered; “its parents or its sponsors, kind and good friends, may teach it to entertain a true and lively sorrow for the faults it has committed, and so to humble itself on bended knee before its Maker, and pray to be forgiven. And here I would observe, that there is one advantage which childhood possesses over riper years, and that is, that the heart of a child is too simple, and has

not indeed the power, to deceive itself ; and therefore there is the greatest probability, that the sorrow it exhibits is sincere. And if this should be the case, why forbid it the necessary grace of the Spirit, without which nothing can be holy or good ; but aided by which, every thing, feeble though it be in itself, becomes most availing? Men there are, I am aware, who make religion a thing of the head, and not of the heart ; a matter of the intellect, not of the affections : and hence they would exclude children from all participation in its advantages, strangely forgetful that a greater than man has said, ‘ Of such is the kingdom of heaven’.<sup>9</sup> The Almighty is more merciful to children,—who, remember, are His children, likewise through baptism,—than are their earthly parents themselves, in such cases ; and He asks not their permission to work as He will.”

I bowed my head in acquiescence, and was silent, musing on what I had heard.

<sup>9</sup> Matt. xix. 14.



Meanwhile the service sped on ; and it was delightful to see how all were engaged in it ; how each one seemed to consider that he himself had a work therein to discharge. The words, “ Our *mouth* shall show forth thy praise,” were not used as a mere form. But together did those rustic worshippers, led by their aged pastor, raise their voice on high, and chant the psalms of the day to the solemn strains of their Christian forefathers. So soon as he, turning to them, had said, “ Praise ye the Lord,” immediately, with one acclaim, they replied, “ The Lord’s name be praised.” The full tide of song then burst forth. From side to side rolled the holy sound ; for they sung the verses antiphonally, according to ancient usage, one side of the choir and people responding to the other ; and then, as each successive psalm was concluded, together would the whole united body of voices join in the peculiarly Christian hymn, “ Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost : As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.”

The holy enthusiasm which animated all, was not unworthy of the immortal beings there met to worship. There are, sad to say, numbers who will spare no expense, no labour, in cultivating the vocal talents that God has largely endowed them with ; and this they will do for no higher purpose than to charm the ear of man, and win a short-lived applause. Hence every nerve will be strained, every endeavour made, their whole art exhausted, for the poor ambition of shining before a human audience. But in the house of God, amid His holy angels, and in His own most glorious praise—a theme for the tongues of Seraphim—here they will be mute. They have no voice for the soul-enthraling song of the sanctuary. They are choristers, not of the Temple of the living God, but of the Fane of the world ; at once the ministers and the victims in its thankless service. But, though this be so, though they be silent, yes, and though *every* tongue of man were thus to forget Him Who made it, Him Who gave it strength to sing, and every turn of its thrilling sweetness ;—though, sooner than mount up to the gate of heaven, it

would prefer to “linger still with sin and woe<sup>1</sup>:”—yet the song of adoration would not cease; everlasting beings, of an order far superior to a creature of earth—the unnumbered hosts of heaven—and along with them the whole creation — the stars of the firmament — the thunder rolling in the skies—the ocean, with its boundless swell—the torrents racing in their myriad watercourses—the feathered tribes in the blue vault above—the trees sighing in the night wind—the very flowers beneath our feet—every thing beside, animate or inanimate, high or low, would join together to testify their homage, in lauding and magnifying His Name !

Thanks be to God, however, there are hearts, and there are tongues, among the children of Adam, not altogether insensible to the influence of Divinity itself. Attractions, more ennobling than this world can offer, draw their soul upward, causing it to soar above the petty aspirations of the flesh. They possess a nobler ambition than to weary out their lives for the

<sup>1</sup> Keble's Christian Year.

applause of their fellows—for a passing breath of the popular gale—the idol which so many bow down to. Their knee is bent, their voice is raised, their homage given, to ONE Whom in loyal love they acknowledge to be their Lord. Such there were among the worshippers in that Village Church. Unpractised and rough though many of the voices might have been, they at least did not lack sincerity and heartiness; and I well knew that it was not the sweetness of the music that God regarded, but the homage of the soul. “Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings” hath He “ordained strength<sup>2</sup> ;” and

“Childlike though the voices be,  
And untunable the parts,  
He will own the minstrelsy,  
If it flow from childlike hearts<sup>3</sup>.”

<sup>2</sup> Ps. viii. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Keble's Christian Year.

## CHAPTER III.

### BAPTISM.

“ Who can the wondrous birth declare  
Of Earth and Heaven, so vast and fair !  
Yet whensoever to Love’s pure spring  
A helpless little one they bring,  
Those wonders o’er again we see  
In saving mystery.

“ All in the unregenerate child  
Is void and formless, dark and wild,  
Till the life-giving, holy Dove  
Upon the waters gently move,  
And power impart, soft-brooding there,  
Celestial fruit to bear.”

LYRA INNOCENTIUM.

THE second lesson ended, amid the still silence and devout attention of the people, a slight movement was visible, the cause of which I quickly perceived.

The priest left the lectern, from whence he

had read the Word of God, and moved up the nave to the door of the Church, where a woman with an infant in her arms, and several persons near her, were standing about the font.

The congregation rose as he passed along, and reverently stood, aware that they were about to be witnesses of the solemn initiation of a young lamb of the flock, and would be called upon to pray to the Giver of all good, to “grant unto him that thing which by nature he could not have;” to be baptized, viz., “with water and the Holy Ghost, and received into Christ’s holy Church, and be made a lively member of the same<sup>1</sup>.”

The venerable old man coming to the font (which was then filled with pure water<sup>2</sup>) put the usual question, “Hath this child been already baptized, or no?” and, on being answered in the negative, proceeded as the service directs.

<sup>1</sup> Service for Public Baptism of Infants.

<sup>2</sup> Rubric to the same.

How pleasing a thing was it to see the earnestness with which the whole congregation joined in the prayers that were then offered up ! They seemed to feel a personal interest in the admission of that young child to the participation of the privileges of Church-membership. Their behaviour, from the striking contrast it presented to what is too often, alas ! the case on such occasions, made a deep impression on me. I was not, however, surprised ; for, as FAITH told me, they had been carefully instructed by their aged pastor in the nature of the mystery they were now celebrating. He had, indeed, with his own hands baptized a large proportion of them in their infancy ; and all were more or less moulded by his precepts. Hence they knew that they who were admitted by baptism into the fold of Christ's Church were members of the Body of Christ ; that, as such, they were by no means independent of one another, but linked together by mutual ties, in a new and sacred relationship. They were persuaded that they were "members of one another," and that, "whether one member

suffer, all the members suffer with it ; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it<sup>3</sup>.” Hence their manifest gratification at this, the spiritual birth of their young and unconscious brother. Hence, too, their attention to the words of the Gospel then appointed to be read, and the sober devotion with which they knelt and uttered the accustomed *Amen*, at the close of each petition. The “supplications of the congregation” were not wanting on this occasion ; and when called upon to “doubt not, but earnestly believe” that God would “favourably receive that present infant<sup>4</sup>,” but few hesitated to do so.

But the questions have been asked of the child’s sponsors, and he has been placed in the priest’s arms.

At that moment, the sun, which had been for a short space obscured by a cloud, suddenly shone forth. The west window of the south aisle, over against the font, on which was de-

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. xii. 26.

<sup>4</sup> Service for Baptism, &c.



picted a beautiful representation of the Baptism of our blessed Lord, caught the reflection of his rays; and the light, warm with a rich crimson hue, fell on the infant's brow, shadowing forth there the fringe of the robe that encircled the holy form of the Saviour. It reminded me, at the moment, of the "hem of the garment," and the "virtue" that went out of the Lord of life, rewarding the faith of the daughter of Israel, who, in her humility and lowliness, scarcely ventured to draw nigh, and put forth her hand to touch it.

Whilst I was thus musing, the liquid stream was poured over him, and again were my eyes supernaturally opened, and I beheld things surpassingly wonderful.

We may not too rashly presume to draw aside the veil that is spread over sacred things; I would fain be cautious, therefore, in doing so. It is meet to "take the shoes from off our feet," when "the place whereon we stand is holy ground." Suffice it then to say, that

“ What sparkled in that lucid flood  
Was water, by gross mortals eyed ;  
But, seen by faith, ’twas blood  
Out of our dear Friend’s side <sup>5</sup>. ”

No sooner were the holy words uttered by which the child was solemnly consecrated in the name of the thrice-blessed Trinity, than a beauteous seraph hovered over him. Fresh he was, as my guide told me, from the very presence of the Almighty, and lustrous, in consequence, with a glory, such as, in a similar, though inferior degree, surrounded the person of Moses when, after speaking with God in the Mount, he had to veil his countenance before the dazzled eyes of the awe-stricken Israelites.

From the heavenly host also, there assembled, a joyous acclaim burst forth, showing that they witnessed not the act of mercy without adoration to Him Who could thus have pity on a fallen race, and receive as His own the offspring of rebellious Adam. “ Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men : ” this

<sup>5</sup> Keble’s Christian Year.

was the burden of their song. Heard first by mortal ear on the plains of Bethlehem, it was ever renewed at each repetition of loving-kindness to man, at each fresh instance of a soul added to the Church.

But now that innocent, unconscious one, that tender plant, fragrant with the very dew of heaven, is being received into the "congregation of Christ's flock," and being signed with the sign of the cross, the badge of his profession. What is the halo that encircles him? Again has light emanated from the Glory-cloud, and rested, as if in act of blessing, over the head of the new-born "child of God."

Where the cross has been traced by the priestly hand, there did a thread of that heavenly light show itself, bright as of gold purified seven times in the fire, and clear like unto burnished silver. It illuminated his whole brow; and, brilliant though it was, yet there was withal a softness in it, that made it not painful for mortal eye to look upon.

I would here observe, that on the brow of all, not only in this Village Church, but also in the Cathedral, had I observed the sign of the Cross. In some, indeed, it shone much brighter than in others, though in none so much as now on the infant's forehead ; while in one or two instances the supernatural flame seemed on the point of expiring. But this, FAITH had informed me, could never be *quite* the case ; for when it should have ceased to glow with a heavenly lustre, then it would become as a corroding fire, eating into the very brain, and consuming the renegade Christian with the slow tortures of remorse and despair.

At this moment, three spirits of surpassing loveliness, one of whom was the bright being who had hitherto been by my side, stooped over the young Christian, and kissed the holy emblem ; and the thought struck me, that Baptism was, of all others, a service in which Faith, Hope, and Charity, the three who were thus caressing him, would especially delight to engage.

Other angel-forms also advanced, to welcome

the newly-made heir of heaven. They seemed to hold converse with his beauteous guardian spirit, who stood there fondly nestling him in his bosom. They were encouraging him, I thought, in his task, and promising him their assistance; for is it not written, “Are they not *all* ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them that shall be heirs of salvation<sup>6</sup>?” And by the manner in which they were pointing to the Cloud of Glory, I concluded that they were bidding him rely chiefly on the light of the countenance of the Most High; and this I knew he would enjoy; for is it not again written, “I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven<sup>7</sup>?”

It was a lovely sight to behold;—beings of another world cherishing that infant babe;—kissing its fair young brow, folding it in their embrace, and regarding it even with awe and reverence, as one on whom the blood of the Incarnate One had itself fallen.

<sup>6</sup> Heb. i. 14.

<sup>7</sup> Matt. xviii. 10.

But FAITH, who had again returned to me, informed me, that the benefits then conferred upon it were not merely for the present, but to continue hereafter. “It is now placed in a state of salvation,” she said, “through the laver of regeneration.” The water, it is true, does not of itself effect this; but by the power of the Holy Ghost it is made *as* the blood of the Eternal Lamb; and the child washed therein, has, through God’s great mercy, the death and merits of his Lord and Saviour thereby assured to him\*. The dead element, so to speak, becomes by the will of the Almighty the channel of living grace to the soul; through it he enters into a covenant with God, in whose sight the stain of his old nature is wiped out, and considered as never having existed. He is now looked upon, through the blood of Jesus; and the Holy Ghost is given him, to dwell in him from henceforth, and to aid him in his spiritual warfare. And should he, through the evil that is in him, by even grievous and presumptuous sins, deeply wound the Spirit of God, and debar himself thereby for the time

\* Jewel ; Tracts of Angl. Fathers, p. 78.

being, from any sense and comfort of the baptismal covenant ; yet when he shall turn, with faith and true repentance, unto God once more, he will be heard and accepted, not because of any new covenant then to be made, but for the old covenant's sake<sup>9</sup>. By his baptism it is that he is the adopted son of God, and so can cry, "Abba, Father ;" he can go to him and say with the "prodigal son" (who though an out-cast was still a son), "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son<sup>1</sup> ;" and "like as a father pitieth his own children," even so will the Lord, if he be a true penitent, and have not sinned beyond the reach of pardon, have compassion upon him, and absolve him from all his offences.

The priest now addressed the congregation, and said, "Seeing, dearly beloved brethren, that this child is regenerate and grafted into the body of Christ's Church, let us give thanks unto

<sup>9</sup> Bp. Jeremy Taylor on the Sacraments, vol. i. Heber's ed.

<sup>1</sup> Luke xv. 18, 19.

Almighty God for these benefits, and with one accord make our prayers unto Him, that this child may lead the rest of his life according to this beginning<sup>2</sup>."

Whilst he was doing this, FAITH drew my attention to a dark form, moving stealthily from one to another of the assembled worshippers. It looked like an evil spirit: its brow was scowling, and its eye downcast, emitting ever and anon a fierce glance of hatred to the priest, who spoke out fearlessly and plainly, without any hesitation or doubt in his manner, and with a clear ringing voice, as of a trumpet, challenging all to attend to the truth.

FAITH, in a low voice, told me that it was *Unbelief*. "Those fearful glances," she said, "are the weapons of her warfare; and should one, but one, reach the heart, the wound inflicted by it would be most dangerous. You see how she directs them against God's minister; but his piety, integrity, and zeal, unite, under the bless-

<sup>2</sup> Baptismal Service.



ing of the Almighty, in forming an impenetrable shield for his protection."

"Is every priest in like security?" I asked.

She did not at once return an answer, but, pausing significantly for a moment, bade me listen. I did so; and heard the words of the appointed thanksgiving, "We yield Thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased Thee to regenerate this infant with Thy Holy Spirit, to receive him for Thine own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into Thy Holy Church<sup>3</sup>." "Heard you that?" she said. "Every priest of God who believes these words, and doubts not the truth of what he so solemnly utters, is in like manner shielded. But, unfortunately, there are some who cannot be thus persuaded; who, though thus using these words as the Church directs, nevertheless presume to think that they may possibly be untrue; and that she, the Church, the "bride of the Lamb," the "keeper of holy writ," the "pillar and

<sup>3</sup> Service for Public Baptism of Infants.

ground of the truth," may at times, in this important matter, draw nigh to her heavenly Master with a "lie in her right hand."

By far the greater number there, I remarked, were sheltered from the baneful influence of *Unbelief*, and their guardian angels were permitted more or less to ward off her venomous shafts. There were some, however, with whom this was not the case ; and I was told that these had too much of the spirit of Nicodemus, and asked, "How can these things be?"—rather than simply believed them, because of the words, "Thus saith the Lord." And hence, sceptical as they were, power was given her to exercise control over them, until they should perceive the folly of such want of faith, and return with a more docile and childlike disposition, to sue for grace, that they might hear *meekly* the word of God, and "receive it with pure affection," and so "bring forth the fruits of the Spirit," in a more obedient and becoming temper of mind.

The cross on their brow methought became

duller as the dark spirit drew nigh ; and when she turned her basilisk eye full upon them, the light that had shone there grew on a sudden indistinct, and its lustre was sensibly diminished.

“ Ah ! ” said FAITH, as I pointed this out to her, “ she blights every thing she looks upon.”

“ And is it only on the subject of baptism,” I asked, “ that she instils her insidious poison into the hearts of her victims ? ”

“ Oh no,” was the reply ; “ in all other matters pertaining to religion she is equally dangerous. But at the present day, and in this country, her attacks seem to be mainly directed against the doctrines involved in that holy sacrament ; for even among the clergy themselves she has found not a few weak enough to advocate the sentiments that she infuses.”

“ And what are these sentiments ? ” I inquired.

“ Many and various,” she answered, according to the several dispositions of those whom she

assails. She well knows their vulnerable points, and adapts herself accordingly. With some she denies the nature of a sacrament altogether in baptism; and teaches them to think it a mere outward ordinance, conveying no inward grace. They, therefore, are accustomed to speak of it as "water-baptism." But the baptism of the Church is no such bare ceremony as this would imply, but one invariably of "water and of the Spirit;" the two being indissolubly linked together by God Himself. This it is, when duly administered by her priesthood, in virtue of her chartered right, through the apostolic succession, to the presence of Christ, in *all* her ministerial actions; but chiefly and above all, in her administration of the sacraments of His appointment. For said He, "Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world<sup>4</sup>." They, it is true, cannot view it in this light; and hence they sometimes call baptism a "profession of faith" on man's part, and lose sight of the saving nature attached to the sacrament by the Almighty. "With the heart man believeth

<sup>4</sup> Matt. xxviii. 20.

unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation<sup>5</sup>," is what they are fond of quoting in defence of their opinion. But this error, if persisted in, will ultimately lead them, as it has already very many<sup>6</sup> to confine the rite to adults altogether; since infants, being unable to speak, can make no profession. Others, again, though not so many, believe that divine grace is imparted in baptism to such infants as will eventually be saved; but that from all others, it is withheld. But the effect of this doctrine would be to destroy all efforts on the part of man in the great work of his salvation. For since he is told that he cannot of himself please God, and that it is only His Spirit which, dwelling in him, can cause him to will or to do that which is right, he must be driven either into the depths of despair on the one hand, or into too great confidence on the other: into the former, should he be led to believe that he has

<sup>5</sup> Rom. x. 10.

<sup>6</sup> In the United States, by a recent census, it appears that there are nearly 4,000,000 Baptists. It is said there to be "the prevailing denomination." There are great numbers too, in the North American Colonies.

no participation in its life-giving grace, and that it is uncertain whether he ever will ; and into the latter, should he feel assured that he is a chosen vessel of the Presence, and being such, can never ultimately perish. Such a view as this would be making Christ to send one part of His servants against their spiritual adversaries entirely unarmed ; whilst the others would be so constantly guarded, that they could not by any possibility ultimately perish. It would deny that St. Paul could ever have been a ‘castaway,’ though he feared lest he might be so<sup>7</sup>. It would declare, that the person who was once the ‘temple of the Holy Ghost,’ could not finally be destroyed ; which the same Apostle contradicts, saying, ‘If any man defile the temple of God him will God destroy ; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are<sup>8</sup>.’ It would pronounce that a branch having once been grafted into the True Vine, could never entirely be plucked therefrom : whereas the Saviour Himself teaches the contrary ; ‘Every branch *in Me* that beareth not

<sup>7</sup> 1 Cor. ix. 27.

<sup>8</sup> 1 Cor. iii. 17 ; and also vi. 18, 19.

fruit, He taketh away;' and again, 'If a man *abide not* in Me,' (showing hereby that he had *once* been in Him,) 'he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned'.<sup>9</sup> But a third, and more numerous party, think, that infants, being incapable of understanding what great things are done for them, cannot therefore participate in them. These maintain, that baptism is not present regeneration to their souls, but the type or figure of a regeneration to occur at some future period. They say, that the powers of the mind being still dormant, infants cannot exercise the necessary requisites of faith and repentance; and hence, nothing being done on their part, God does nothing on His. The Church has never said a word to cause them to think thus. She, on the contrary, bids every one 'doubt not but earnestly believe, that He will favourably receive'<sup>10</sup> every infant, without any

<sup>9</sup> John xv. 2. 6.

<sup>10</sup> Service for "Public Baptism of Infants." In the corresponding part of the service for "*Private Baptism of Infants*," the child having been previously baptized at home, and the

limitation, that she brings to Him in baptism ; and her opinion of the kind of reception vouchsafed to it, is set forth in her thanksgiving, which we but lately heard. There, as you know, she declares her heartfelt gratitude, ‘ That it hath pleased Him to regenerate that infant *with His Holy Spirit*, to receive him for His own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into His holy Church ;’ that, in short, the gift He has been pleased to confer upon it, is *spiritual regeneration*<sup>1</sup>.”

“ True,” observed I ; “ but they say, that the same language is used respecting adults.”

“ I know it,” was her reply ; “ but herein they err, I would hope unwittingly. For, in the

fact now publicly declared in the face of the congregation, the words are “ doubt not, &c., that He *hath* likewise favourably received this present infant, that He *hath* embraced him, &c.”

<sup>1</sup> Precisely the same words are used in the “ Private Baptism of Infants ;” which shows, that in the Church’s view the grace accompanies the *sacrament purely*, and does not depend on the faith of the child’s *sponsors*, a plea often alleged : for in the administration of baptism *privately*, no sponsors need be present.



Exhortation before the Baptism of Adults, the Church makes a limitation of a most important kind, viz., that the persons presenting themselves are persons 'truly repenting and turning unto God by faith'.<sup>2</sup> She therefore baptizes them on the supposition that they do so, *i.e.* that they 'repent, and have faith'; and on this supposition it is, that she declares them 'regenerate'. But, should the persons seeking for her sacred ordinances, deceive her by false pretences; should they *not* be truly 'repenting, and turning unto Christ by faith'; then her declaration regarding them will be of no avail to them: for it was made of such as she supposed to be true penitent believers, and of such alone. To no hypocrite can it be applicable. But in the case of infants it is altogether different. There, no limitation, no proviso, of any kind, exists; but *all* duly baptized infants are, to use her words, 'regenerate, and grafted into the body of Christ's

<sup>2</sup> Exhortation in the "Public Baptism of such as are of Riper Years."

<sup>3</sup> It is worthy of remark, that in the "Thanksgiving" after the Baptism of Adults, its tone is not of that confident character, that it is after the Baptism of Infants.

Church;' as such, she says, that, 'dying before they commit actual sin, they will undoubtedly be saved'.<sup>4</sup> Now she could not declare this of them, unless she held, that when they were *baptized* they were *born again spiritually*; for a Greater than she has said, that no one can enter into the kingdom of God, unless he be 'born of water and of the Spirit'.<sup>5</sup> Hence, in her opinion, they must have been so born, when baptized; for, otherwise, she must have said, that, 'dying, they must undoubtedly perish.' And there is nothing unreasonable in this. Every one knows, and is ready to acknowledge, what the right of citizenship is, and what privileges it confers, even on the unconscious babe.<sup>6</sup> When the Scriptures relate that the Chief Captain said unto the Apostle, 'With a great sum obtained I this freedom,' and Paul said, 'But I was free born',<sup>7</sup> the idea of birth-

<sup>4</sup> Rubric at the end of the service for the "Public Baptism of Infants."

<sup>5</sup> John iii. 5.

<sup>6</sup> "Mercy to Babes," by the Rev. W. Adams, S. T. P. of the Prot. Ep. Ch., U. S.

<sup>7</sup> Acts xxii. 28.

right is at once readily comprehended. And if men can see how birth gives an earthly citizenship, even to those who can know nothing of the advantages they thereby obtain, why should they be incredulous of a heavenly citizenship being in like manner bestowed, through the agency of God's Holy Spirit, in the 'sacramental mystery of the new birth?'"

"Why," remarked I then, "is it said in the Catechism, that two things are required of persons to be baptized, viz., 'repentance, whereby they forsake sin; and faith, whereby they stedfastly believe the promises of God made to them in that sacrament?'"

"These things are required of them," she replied, "so soon as they are able to perform them; just as a citizen is compelled to comply with the requisitions of the State, when he becomes old enough to do so. But, as he was a citizen of that earthly kingdom by inalienable right, before this period; so, likewise, the baptized infant is no less a citizen of the kingdom of

heaven, though he be unable, from his tender age, as yet to put in practice the requisitions that are imposed on him. But it would be well if men would be more humble, and strive more earnestly to possess these qualities themselves. Surely there is reason for them to do so. Our Lord told *His disciples* that *they* had not ‘faith as a grain of mustard-seed<sup>s</sup>’; how, then, shall any think that they, of their own will, can exercise this virtue? Their very captiousness betrays great want of it, and no little spiritual pride. Enough, however. In every one who has come to years of discretion, these qualifications are necessary; he must, therefore, pray God to give him them. Having many and many a time fallen into temptation, and been led to the commission of actual sin, thereby deeply grieving the Holy Spirit within him, his duty is continually to repent; and, having a lively faith meanwhile, to return to his heavenly Father, and beseech Him, on the strength of his baptism, now long since past, to look upon him as His own son by adoption, and so to have mercy upon

<sup>s</sup> Matt. xvii. 20.

him; and in the waters of that baptism will the Almighty recognize His own token of love towards him, even as he sees it in the 'bow that is in the cloud;' and, looking on it, He will pardon and forgive him: as it is written, 'Baptism doth also *now* (even at this present time) save us, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ'.<sup>9</sup> Let people do but this, and they would find it far more conducive to their eternal welfare, than curiously speculating into the spiritual state of others, and endeavouring, with the gross eye of the carnal man, to pierce into those things which it hath pleased God to place before them only as mysteries."

<sup>9</sup> 1 Pet. iii. 21.

## CHAPTER IV.

### CATECHISING.

Scratch the green rind of a sapling, or wantonly twist it in the soil,

The marred and crooked oak will tell of thee for centuries to come ;

Even so thou may'st guide the mind to good, or lead it to the marrings of evil ;

For disposition is builded up by the fashioning of first impressions.

Wherefore, though the voice of instruction waiteth for the ear of reason,

Yet with his mother's milk the young child drinketh education.

PROVERBIAL PHILOSOPHY.

AT the conclusion of the service of Baptism, the clergyman returned, and proceeded to catechise the children.

I had a great desire to observe his mode of performing this important duty ; for I was con-

vinced that to it he owed, in no small degree, the influence which he possessed over the minds of his people.

Knowing from long experience the value of his kindly exhortations, they could not behold him so evidently about his Master's business, as he then was, tending the lambs of the fold, without silently and thankfully invoking the blessing of Heaven upon him. In the language of the patriarch, it might be said, that, "when the ear heard him, then it blessed him."

You might have distinguished, had you narrowly watched their countenances, *who* were the mothers of the children, from the shade of anxiety that would flit across the face of each of them, as their own were severally questioned. The cheek of such an one would flush, as she caught the first words of the reply. A mingled emotion of apprehension and pleasure would be seen to agitate her, as, one by one, the well-known and faltering accents fell upon her ear. Her maternal heart would beat, and a tear

would suffuse her eye, as her child went slowly on ; and when it had come successfully to the end, a long-suppressed breath would escape her lips ; and you would see her look timidly round, for the kind sympathy of her neighbours,—a sympathy given ere asked for ; and from her thankful look and well-pleased smile, you would be sure that all her patient labour for the past week, in preparing him with his task, was more than repaid.

It is not to be supposed, however, that the words which those children uttered were all understood by them, even when the clergyman, in the most affectionate and simple language, had endeavoured to explain them. Some, indeed, were so young, that they could not have had more than the faintest conception of what was said. But we would be loth to believe, notwithstanding, that all was idly thrown away. Whatever else resulted, one thing at least was evident, viz., that holy sounds became in this way familiar to their ears, and their tongues learned to frame them : and though it was true



that they were taught, long before their reason could fathom its meaning, to lisp some glorious truth, which of old “sages would have died to learn,” and which even “angels desired to look into;” yet, at all events, there was by this means laid up a store beforehand, on which in after-time their ripening mind could feed; and a test was provided them, by which to discern what was to be chosen as good, and what to be rejected as evil. Hence, so soon as the dormant faculties had put forth their tender shoots, and, peeping from the fallow soil of infancy, were demanding instant nourishment, immediately was that nourishment afforded them; and the earliest aspirations of their souls being thus ministered to, they were in consequence strengthened against the blight of the Evil One, which otherwise would have nipped them in the bud.

Will any smile at this? If so, then let him smile also at all the endeavours of man to become holy; for how puny must every one of them appear, when measured by the standard of Divine excellence! For—

“ What are all prayers beneath,  
But cries of babes, who cannot know  
Half the deep thoughts they breathe <sup>1</sup> ! ”

Whenever we adore the Triune God, and breathe the prayer that the Incarnate One taught His disciples to use, do we comprehend the full meaning of what we give utterance to, or even all that is contained in a single sentence of it? Do not the angels round the Throne attach a far higher meaning than we to the holy words? Do not they soar above our weak comprehensions, further, much further, than we above those of our children? And yet angels even fathom not their perfect intent. God alone can do this. Still He receives the homage paid to Him by angels, and accepts that of men. Why then should we think that the simple efforts of the infant, all feeble though they be, should alone be inadmissible, alone rejected; that He should not deign to own them, whilst He accepts all the rest?

Such were the thoughts that passed through

<sup>1</sup> Christian Year.

my mind, and they were confirmed by the heavenly monitor by my side : "Independently of this," she said, "it is no slight matter to win their affections, before their reason is capable of much impression. For in so doing, a hold is gained over them in all after-life, which, when exercised with discretion, cannot fail to be of the highest importance. But observe who aids him in his work of love."

I now perceived, what before I had not remarked, a being of angelic beauty, sitting at his right hand. Her aspect was of the most winning kind. Purity, peace, and love were most distinctly portrayed there, in unmistakeable characters, and in her smile there was a sweetness and serenity that baffles all description. It was Charity that presided there ; and I felt that, humble though the scene might ordinarily appear, and to some perchance wearisome and insipid, it was still full of happy interest, evoking the kindest and holiest emotions that we are susceptible of. It was a picture which few Christians could have witnessed unmoved : on the one hand,

the innocence of childhood; on the other, revered old age; both mutually engaged in an occupation that lent a charm to either. But there was a class there, of young persons of either sex preparing for Confirmation, and to them did he more especially devote his attention.

It was a pleasing sight to look upon. Decently and cleanly clad, with fresh and happy looks, beaming with sincerity and truth, a philanthropist would have gazed on them, with real and genuine satisfaction; more especially if he had been previously conversant with the pallid looks and cunning expressions of those wretched spectral-looking beings, who, old almost before they are young, haunt the by-ways and streets of the crowded metropolis, or a busy manufacturing mart.

At first, when the pastor addressed them, some slight confusion was visible among them. Their colour went and came; their breathing was thicker and more hurried; and each one looked as if he felt that on him particularly every eye

was turned. This feeling, however, gradually wore off: soon they got interested; eye met eye, and gained encouragement from the glance; and as the exhortation was proceeded with, their whole attention became absorbed by it. Ardour and enthusiasm deepened the ruddy hue of health; their hand was clenched, and their brow knit, as he spoke to them of their duties as sworn soldiers of the cross; and of the spiritual adversaries they would have to encounter: impressions were made, only to be forgotten with their lives; and good resolutions formed, (too many of them, it might be, unrealised in after-time,) to follow the course that he pointed out to them.

After carefully examining them in the Catechism, more particularly in the part relating to the sacraments, he addressed them in terms much as follow:—

“ My dear children, you were placed in a state of salvation, as in your Catechism you have been taught, by the holy waters of baptism. The

gift of the Spirit was then first imparted to you, by God Himself. Children of wrath before, you were by its instrumentality made the children of grace, and taken into covenant with Him. Now you remember, doubtless, how, in escaping from the bondage of Egypt, the Children of Israel had to pass through the Red Sea, a way being made for them by the Almighty through its waters. And precisely in the same manner are the waters of baptism appointed of God, through which to escape from a slavery worse than that of Egypt,—the slavery of sin and death, in which we are by nature.

“But did the passage through the Red Sea put the Israelites in possession of the promised land? By no means. On the contrary, they had to go a long and tedious journey through the wilderness, ere they could attain it. Neither did they all reach it; ‘for with many of them God was not well pleased’<sup>2</sup>;’ and so they were cut off, on their way thither. And thus it is with Christians. Baptized in infancy, for the

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. x. 5.

most part, and admitted by that means into a state of favour and acceptance with their heavenly Father, a long and tedious journey is still before them, beset with many dangers, many temptations ; and the aid of the Holy Spirit, without Whom they can do nothing that is pleasing in God's sight, is constantly needed, to keep them from falling. You must, all of you, my dear children, remember this ; and instantly pray God, day and night, on bended knee, to give you continually of that Spirit, so that you may be preserved in the state of salvation, in which you were placed in baptism, even unto your lives' end. Be never discouraged in this ; despair not of your prayers being heard ; for it is the promise of our Saviour, that He will not ' break the bruised reed, or quench the smoking flax '.\* He knoweth our infirmities, and therefore can sympathize with them. He is the good Shepherd, who carries the tender lambs in His very bosom. And He has Himself declared that His ' heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him '†.

\* Matt. xii. 20.

† Luke xi. 13.

“ You are now at an important period of your lives : you are on the eve of ratifying the vows made for you by others ; and are seeking, through the laying on of hands after apostolical usage, fresh graces from on high. I would fain hope, that, as you have known more about God, your wish is to draw nearer to Him ; that, as you have learnt more about His Church, you desire to be more fully members of it ; that you are anxious to enter for yourselves your own names, as children of the Covenant ; to speak, as it were, to your Father in Heaven, with your own voice ; to dedicate yourselves afresh, not now by the mouth of others, but in your *own persons*, to the service of your Redeemer ; that so, for you may ascend the prayer of the Church for the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit,—‘ the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength, the spirit of knowledge and true godliness, and the spirit of God’s holy fear <sup>s</sup> :’ and, as the world is now opening before you in increased dangers and

<sup>s</sup> Book of Common Prayer. Order of Confirmation.



duties, so you may have those fresh graces given you, which are necessary to fit you against the coming strife. Such, we trust, will be sealed to you in Confirmation: a service in which we confirm our baptismal pledges, and are, in return, confirmed by the Spirit<sup>6</sup>.

“ We receive strength and grace in fresh supplies, fulfilling that which was begun in us in baptism. Ah, my dear children, the flesh, and the carnal will, and the world with its many attractions, are all beginning to show you your danger and your frailty. How shall you be enabled to triumph over them; how to walk worthy of your high calling in Christ; to perform your duties towards God and towards man; to follow the example of your great Master, and to be made like unto Him? How shall ye die unto sin, and rise again unto righteousness, ‘continually mortifying all your evil and corrupt affections, and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living’?<sup>7</sup>” My

<sup>6</sup> Bennett’s Analogy of the Prayer Book with Human Life.

<sup>7</sup> Book of Common Prayer.

young friends, invoke, I beseech you, the all-powerful aid of the Holy Ghost the Comforter—yes, let the assembled Church implore it on your behalf. The battle is at hand ; put ye on, then, the armour that God supplies ; ‘ the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit <sup>8</sup>.’

“ But, after Confirmation, the Christian—and here, my brethren, I speak to all of you—is not yet in full union with Christ. Confirmation is but initiatory to another holy ordinance, the Sacrament, namely, of the Lord’s Supper. There are *two* Sacraments, we are told, that are ‘ necessary to salvation <sup>9</sup> ;’ and, to fulfil all the points of our covenant, we must, having partaken of the first, advance to the second. *Born* into a new life by the one, we can only be *sustained* in that life by the other. And as the natural birth of man is but once, so baptism is only once ; whereas, the sustenance of man by food being

<sup>8</sup> Eph. vi. 14—17.

<sup>9</sup> Church Catechism.

continual, so also must the eating and drinking sacramentally 'the body and blood of Christ' be continual likewise. By the one we are washed, never to be washed again ; by the other, we are constantly and repeatedly to be filled.

“ Christianity, beloved, is a Sacramental Religion ; that is, inward grace is given us through the means of outward signs. Archbishop Cranmer, among others, has shown this most explicitly. ‘ For this cause,’ he says, ‘ Christ ordained baptism in water ; that as surely as we see, feel, and touch water with our bodies, and be washed with water ; so assuredly ought we to believe, when we be baptized, that Christ is verily present with us, and that by Him we be newly born again spiritually, and washed from our sins. And for this cause He ordained the sacrament in bread and wine ; to the intent, that, as surely as we see the bread and wine with our eyes, touch them with our hands, and taste them with our mouths, so assuredly ought we to believe, that Christ is the spiritual life and sustenance of our souls, like as the bread and

wine is the food and sustenance of our body. Thus our Saviour Christ, knowing us to be in the world, as it were, but babes and weaklings in faith, hath ordained sensible signs or tokens, whereby to allure and draw us to more strength, and more constant faith in Him<sup>1</sup>. These, it is true, are mysteries: we cannot attain to a perfect knowledge of them. This circumstance, however, should not shake our belief in them; for, remember, that it is for us to ‘walk by faith, and not by sight<sup>2</sup>.’

“And, mysterious though they be, they are not otherwise than in accordance with God’s ordinary dealings with man. For He hath ever revealed Himself by means of a sacramental religion. Even in Eden there was a sacrament, an outward sign of an inward grace—the Tree of life, conveying the grace of immortality by means of its visible fruit. Again, after the flood, the Almighty said, ‘I do set *my Bow* in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a cove-

<sup>1</sup> Cranmer on Lord’s Supper, lib. i. cap. xii.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. v. 7.

nant between me and the earth,' that 'the waters shall no more become a flood, to destroy all the earth'.<sup>3</sup> Here was a sacrament to the whole world at large; 'an outward and visible sign' of favour unto man; a sign 'ordained by God himself;' 'a pledge to assure us' of His mercy<sup>4</sup>. Again, the sacrament of Circumcision was given unto the descendants of Abraham,—a sign of the inward circumcision of the heart. It was renewed under Moses; and the ordinance of the Passover further enjoined, as a sacramental type of the Lamb of God, which was slain in the fulness of time.

"And so I might go on to speak of other things: the 'spiritual' food they ate of, whilst in the wilderness; the 'Rock' of which they drank, 'which Rock was Christ';<sup>5</sup> both of which things were visible tokens of God's intimate and mysterious presence with them. I

<sup>3</sup> Gen. ix. 13. 15.

<sup>4</sup> Jeremy Taylor on the Sacraments, vol. i. Heber's edition.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Cor. x. 4.

might mention likewise the brazen Serpent set upon a pole ; so that ‘it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he looked upon the one of brass, he lived ‘.’ But enough has been said, I am persuaded, to show you that there is nothing extraordinary in the fact of the Christian dispensation being of a sacramental nature. We need not feel surprise that the Most High should continue to work in the self-same way that He had always done before. Christ, we read, came ‘not to destroy, but to fulfil’;’ shall we marvel, then, that He also should appoint *His* sacraments ? that the occupation of the last night before His crucifixion should have been the institution of the Holy Eucharist ? His last command to His disciples, ‘Go ye, teach all nations, baptizing them ?’

“This is by no means weakened, rather it is confirmed, when we try it by the analogy of this life. For is not our daily life sustained by sacraments, so to speak ? What conveys nourish-

<sup>6</sup> Numb. xxi. 9.

<sup>7</sup> Matt. v. 17.

ment to our bodies? what blood to our veins? Outward signs—the productions of the earth, things which our senses can perceive—these are the means of our inward support. We cannot tell how these things are—how our food is converted into that which sustains life—into blood, into bone, into sinew : so that without it we should die. We only know it is so, and that God has so appointed it. And would that, in religion, we could as easily come to the same conclusion ; that we could calmly and believingly say to our souls, ‘ God has appointed this : I have nothing to do, therefore, but humbly make use of it !’

“ But, alas ! my brethren, the same pride which worked man’s ruin in paradise, prevents this from being the case. It bids us rely more on self. It whispers to us, to win heaven by our own efforts ; either by good *works*, the merits of which we appropriate to ourselves, on the one hand ; or good *feelings*, which we also call our own, on the other : hiding from us the great truth, that it is God, and He alone, ‘ that

worketh in us both to *will* and to *do*<sup>8</sup>.' And, prone as we are to yield to its suggestions, we too much neglect to seek for God's grace, as He has enjoined it to be sought.

"Hence it is, that men crave for passionate and moving appeals to the feelings ; for stirring exhortations and human eloquence. But if, in this array of human might and power, the Spirit of God should be lost sight of, or be in any way a secondary object, what shall it all profit ? for 'this is the word of the Lord, 'Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts '<sup>9</sup>."

"You will remember, beloved, that the Almighty did not appear unto Elijah in the 'great and strong wind,' which 'rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord.' No : 'the Lord was not in the wind ;' nor yet was He 'in the earthquake, nor in the fire ;' but He came in the 'still small voice'<sup>1</sup>. 'Not by

<sup>8</sup> Phil. ii. 13.

<sup>9</sup> Zech. iv. 6.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings xix. 11, 12.



might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts.' And so now, too, He comes—His Spirit comes—in the commonest things of this life. He comes in the 'still small voice'—yes; for He comes in the waters of Baptism, and in the bread and wine of the Eucharist. True religion can never exist without the sacraments. The Word of God will not avail without His grace accompanying it; the means of grace, therefore, cannot be safely neglected. The services of religion without sacraments would be 'wells without water,' 'clouds and wind without rain'.<sup>2</sup>

"The baptismal covenant is the *germ* of the spiritual life—of the Spirit's indwelling in man. Baptismal grace is the early rain that makes the tender shoot put forth its first small leaves. These afterwards must be watered with the fresh dews and latter rain of the Spirit given in prayer; in the reading of God's holy Word; in the apostolic rite of Confirmation (of which you,

<sup>2</sup> 2 Pet. ii. 17; Prov. xxv. 14.

my dear children, will shortly, I trust, be recipients); and in the most holy Supper of the Lord<sup>3</sup>, from which, I hope, none of you will seek to turn away. ‘Having put your hand to the plough, I pray you not to look back’<sup>4</sup>.

“‘This do in remembrance of me.’ Is it possible that a Christian, *a soldier of Christ*, can disobey his Saviour’s dying and affectionate command—‘Take, eat, this is *my body*?’ Oh, what heavenly sustenance! oh, what wonderful love!—

‘That man His foe, by whom He bled,  
Should take Him for his daily bread’<sup>5</sup>!

‘Drink ye all of this.’ How shall one of us then be found to slight the invitation? On the last night that thy Saviour was on earth—soon to go forth to the garden, to endure a more than mortal agony for thee, O brother; to suffer stripes, insults, torments; to undergo the cruel,

<sup>3</sup> The foregoing sentence is in a sermon by the Rev. Dr. Wordsworth, Canon of Westminster.

<sup>4</sup> Luke ix. 62.

<sup>5</sup> Christian Year.

cruel death, awarded only to the most atrocious malefactors; and have His heart broken on the cross, and all this for thee—think of this: all this for thee:—on that night, He bade thee ‘do this in remembrance of Him.’ Canst thou, then, find it in thy heart *not* to do it? He, what did He not do for thee?—what did He not suffer for thee? and yet thou canst (is it so?)—thou canst coldly, ungratefully, sinfully, yea, most sinfully, neglect His dying wish, His dying entreaty—ay,—and fear, too,—His dying *command*?

“And yet I would not speak harshly. I would entreat you, I would implore you, in the veriest love for your souls, wherein the Spirit of Christ dwells, constraining me to love you; I would implore you, I say, to ponder on these things. Many, I am aware, shrink from presenting themselves at the altar from good motives. Believe me, however, the motives, though they may be good in themselves, lead to a mistaken result. You think yourselves, perchance, unworthy: who, alas! is not? Oh, if you really do so think—if you are abashed, in consequence,

at your sinful lives past—if you can lie down in the dust, and cry for mercy on your souls—if you can entreat the Lord to spare, to blot out your iniquities—if you can loathe your past wickedness, and desire eagerly to be clothed henceforward with the ‘clean linen which is the righteousness of saints’—if you can ‘love the brethren’—if you can forgive your enemies sincerely from the bottom of your heart; then, oh, come, come, ye trembling ones; ye are indeed meet recipients—would that we were all equally so! Ye will verily find grace to your souls. The words of mercy will come, floating like charmed music from the sanctuary, inviting you to ‘draw nigh.’ ‘Come unto me, all that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you<sup>6</sup>.’ Draw ye nigh, then, and receive in that sacred feast a blessing unspeakable; for the gift there given, is the very ‘Body and Blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord’s Supper.’<sup>7</sup> Our eye, it is true, sees not this, for it is a

<sup>6</sup> Matt. xi. 28 : and Communion Office.

<sup>7</sup> Church Catechism.

spiritual communication ; but it is the *more real even, because spiritual*. Unaccompanied by aught which our senses can perceive, it is still a miracle—a miracle of love, which it pleases Him, Whose name and nature is love, continually to work for us. And, as if it had not been love enough, to have given Himself for us on the cross, He has found a way to give Himself to us in this Holy Sacrament ; to unite Himself to us with the most intimate union that it is possible to conceive ; to become the very food, the life, the strength, the support of the soul ; to become one with us ; to become the very soul of our soul <sup>s</sup>.

“ These remarks have run to a greater length than ordinary, because I would take advantage of the present occasion, when your minds, my children, have been aroused to the solemn responsibilities that rest upon you, and to the dangers that threaten you, and to the importance, therefore, of an early and trustful reliance

<sup>s</sup> Bp. Ken's Manual for the Winchester scholars.

on the arm of God. Lean not, my young friends, nor any of you, my people, on the arm of flesh, but wholly and solely on the arm of God-head itself. And now to that Glorious Being let us continue our worship, humbly suing for grace at His footstool, through the merits of His dear Son, and may His blessing be with us therein !”

\* \* \* \* \*

I stood in the churchyard ; and the breeze blew cool on my temples. All had gone. The trees rustled slightly in the evening air ; the brook murmured its rippling lullaby in my ears. Twilight was peeping over the western horizon, as if seeking still to linger in that peaceful valley. I looked around me. There rested the remains of the dead. My heart was full. I raised my hat from my brow. I breathed a prayer to Heaven, that when my time came, I might be ready ; I might “sleep in the Lord ;” that in my human nature—the *dead in sin*—the living principle implanted at my Baptism, might have its increase, might grow on un-

quenched, unsubdued by my evil passions and affections, nurtured and fed by the gracious indwelling of the Spirit ; that there might be in me, stronger and stronger each day unto the end, that which I felt myself to be at that moment,

“THE LIVING AMONG THE DEAD.”

## CHAPTER V.

### THE CHURCHYARD.

"'Tis sweet, as year by year we lose  
Friends out of sight, in faith to muse  
How grows in Paradise our store."

CHRISTIAN YEAR.

As I stood musing in this wise, a slight rustling sound near me arrested my attention. It was caused by an old man of a most venerable appearance. His countenance wore an air of holy serenity, such as I had seldom beheld. His locks were as silver, his brow lofty and majestic, and his clear blue eye shone with a light that seemed to penetrate into the very soul. It had that peculiar property, which impresses the observer with the idea, that in the depths of its azure orb there is a judgment-hall, where the truth is ever being calmly and carefully selected,



and error and falsehood as carefully and surely cast on one side. As I gazed on him, with feelings somewhat akin to awe, he thus addressed me :

“ My name,” he said, “ is *Meditation*. Silent hours and solitary places do I delight in ; but especially such as this do I love,—the holy quiet of a country Churchyard at eventide. It is good, my son, for man to look upon the final resting-place of all, the bourne whither he himself must ere long be carried. It is wise for him to linger, with no other companion than his own thoughts, in the place where those who have lived before him, sleep their last long sleep, and where his own head must shortly be pillowed. For so to him will arise light out of darkness, and living truths from the graves of the dead. Come with me, then, and together let us wander among their quiet abodes.”

The sun had set, and the moon, riding peacefully in the blue vault above, shed her light upon us. It streamed in through the trees that girt

the sacred enclosure, and rested on the tombstones, and on the old church hard by. Shadows, dim and indistinct, fell, in many a wavy and mysterious outline, across our path, and an indescribable thrill crept over me, as I followed him among them.

Suddenly he stopped, and, pointing to a humble grave, the headstone of which was a simple cross, "Seest thou," he said, "that grey stone, my son? Beneath it lies one, whose head was bowed with years; though, perhaps, more so with continued prostration before the throne of grace. His scanty locks were white—white with the snows of many winters; but a halo, as it were, of glory, was wont to encircle them, as at sunset he would sink upon his knees, and think upon his own declining days—the sand of his hour-glass fast running out. At such times I was wont to be his constant companion, and he loved to take counsel at my mouth. Yes: there he lies, mouldering to dust. But one thing remains unchanged. Mortal eyes may not discern it, but that Being does, from Whom

no secrets are hid. Yes : one thing remains unchanged, amid all that is passing away, and that is, the Cross—the Cross written in tears, in penitence, in prayer—written in praise, in the hallelujahs of the daily worship, and in the more solemn ones of the Eucharistic sacrifice—written, ay, graven indelibly, by the Holy Spirit, within his very heart of hearts. This mark he bore on earth, and this mark he shall bear in heaven, as the badge of his faith through all eternity. Inwardly he shall bear it, in his heart, as indicative of his love ; and outwardly also, on his brow, the throne of his intellect, where erst in holy baptism consecrated hands had signed it.

“And what are the letters that are traced on the humble headstone ? They are few, but they are pregnant with meaning. They are ‘FAITH.’ Yes ; for he sank to his rest full of years, but fuller still of faith. He was ripe in age ; but riper, riper far, in good works, which are the fruits of faith. And now, ‘Faith’ is written on his tombstone. Her very form flits,

as it were, round about him. She has enveloped him with a sacred halo, in which, after sleeping for a season, he shall awake to an inheritance in that country whither, whilst a stranger and pilgrim on earth, he was ever travelling.

“Not far away,” he continued, “is another grave. The wild flowers are wont to smile, and their fragile forms to dance, on it, in the summer breeze. Well they may; for they shed their fragrance over one like themselves, over one in the flower of his beauty, who was called away whilst yet in the bloom of his youth. Ah, my son, it is not only the old that are called. He also is gone, his spirit summoned hence by Him Who sent it forth. Hard was the struggle indeed, to bid farewell to scenes which looked so smiling and redolent of joy, masking, as they did, the misery and sin that lay beneath their surface; but he had been taught to think on other and nobler subjects—subjects lasting in their nature and imperishable. The existence of an ever-present God, was no unreality with him. Frequently would he seek Him, confessing his unworthiness, and suing for

pardon and for grace. He had never laid him down to rest, or risen in the morning, without bending his knee in lowly humility, and imploring the aid, the protection, and the blessing of his Heavenly Father. The name, again, of JESUS, his Redeemer—that sacred name was a hallowed sound in his ears. How often had his manly head been bowed, as with holy awe and reverence he had uttered it! He had learnt, too, after the pattern of his Great Master, to deny himself; and, in order to become a faithful soldier and servant, he would discipline his body by a diligent observance of the Fasts of the Church; that so he might the better overcome the sinful desires of the flesh, so as not ‘to follow or be led away by them.’ The means of grace he had carefully sought. Confirmed by hands that exercised apostolic functions, he at the earliest opportunity afterwards, presented himself at the Altar, for a further participation of the Most Holy Presence in his soul, in the awful mysteries of our religion. Thus, as he had grown in years, he had grown also in grace. The presence of Christ, indwelling in him, had strength-

ened him with his strength, and stablished him with his stature ; and so, when his hour came, it found him ready, whispering, ‘ Come as Thou wilt come, even so come, Lord Jesu, and have mercy upon me ! ’ And now, my son, he ‘ rests in hope.’ That tall sapling, which rears its head so vigorously to heaven, is a true type of him. Well, then, may ‘ HOPE ’ be written there—‘ hope that maketh not ashamed ; ’ hope, only to be dissolved, only to be done away in certainty.

“ Come, let us move on : the night air is damp and cold—but stay, here is one little mound. See how the dew sparkles in the moonlight as we draw near—nature’s gems spangling her own soft verdant carpet. How lovingly Earth seems to wind her arms round the happy dead, to nurse it, as it were, tenderly in her lap ! And no wonder ; for there sleeps the new-born Babe. Formerly, it was of this world. Kind friends brought it to the regenerating font. The liquid stream, poured upon its young brow, conveyed, through the agency of the Holy One, the promised gift of the Spirit. Christ received as His

own, him whom His Church presented to Him ; and within that young flesh, so lately the scion of Adam's sinful nature, was tabernacled the Lord of life, 'the New Man.'

" But he was taken hence—taken from a world of misery to a paradise of joy. The nearest approach, whilst on earth, to the seraphic natures that surround the Throne—the brightest link between fallen man and perfect upright beings—he was spared the trials that await suffering humanity. His spirit returned to Him Who gave it. All that remains of his visible form, lies here : it rests beneath the sod. What shall we write, then, over it ? We will write but one word—'CHARITY.' Charity—for no human passions had distorted or defiled its brow. Anger, passion, sullenness, resentment, alike were strangers to its soul. Charity—for its tongue had never learnt to poison the air with half-whispered surmisings ; no petty jealousies, no unkind thoughts, had as yet pointed the biting sarcasm. Charity—for the nearest approach to that heavenly virtue to be found in this world,'is

in the unsuspecting, the confiding, the artless innocence of childhood.

“Angels, such as ‘always behold the face of our Father which is in heaven,’ had loved to hover around it whilst of this earth ; and now they keep watch over the lifeless clay, eager, in God’s appointed time, to receive it, a glorified and a spiritual body, tenanted with its ‘ virgin soul ;’ to receive it amid their own glorious ranks ; and together to ‘ follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth <sup>1</sup>.’ ”

So spake the aged man ; and, as he did so, my whole attention was riveted by him. His dignified bearing and impressive gestures recalled to my mind the visions I had pictured to myself, of God’s prophets of old ; and his words and language, of a nature such as I had never heard before, sunk like charmed music into my ear.

He paused ; and both for awhile were silent—

<sup>1</sup> Rev. xiv. 4.



busy with the thoughts that had been called forth.

At this moment, a cloud passing over the moon, cast a temporary obscurity on the scene. I looked up, and watched it for a few seconds, as it slowly flitted across her disc; and when I bent my gaze downwards once more, to seek for my companion, he was gone.

I turned to go likewise, and, softly stepping on the turf, I left the Churchyard. The gate, as I opened it, grated harshly on its hinges, and swung back heavily into its place.—I thought of the time when it would close upon me, never again to open for my return;—when, through the noonday glare, and the midnight gloom—the heat of summer, and the winter's cold—I should still slumber on, in the same narrow bed, on the same clay-cold pillow.

“Ah,” sighed I, “may the Almighty grant, for the Lord Jesu's sake, that my ‘death be the death of the righteous, and my last end like

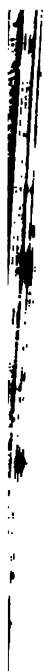
his<sup>2</sup>!’ ‘For the souls of the righteous are in the hands of God, and there shall no torment touch them. In the sight of the unwise, they seemed to die, and their departure is taken for misery—their going from us to be utter destruction; but they are in peace<sup>3</sup>.’ ‘They rest from their labours,’

“‘THE LIVING AMONG THE DEAD.’”

<sup>2</sup> Num. xxiii. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Wisd. iii. 1, 2.

THE END.



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